

Aristasia Treasure Trove

Government in Aristasia Wednesday, May 14 2008

Aristasian Customs and Aristasian Society and Culturearistasia9:17 pm



The rulers of the Aristasian nations are their respective Queens who are advised by non-elected advisors, somewhat the equivalent of senior civil servants – that is professional managers of State who help the Queen to do what she wants to do.

The job of the Queen, as titular and political Head of State, is essentially to facilitate the Dance of the Cosmos as it is reflected in the microcosm of her nation – not to change the steps, either according to her own ideas or to the latest fashions. Obviously certain changes must sometimes be made in adaptation to changing conditions, but these are rarely controversial and always tactful. It is the essence of the State to be literally stately. That is what Princesses are trained for from the earliest age.

There are parliaments in most nations, but these are of much less importance than in Telluria. They debate certain subjects and make formal recommendations to the Queen which are usually acted upon, though this is entirely at the Royal discretion. Again these recommendations are rarely controversial.

Most parliaments do not have general elections, but a representative is elected when required – when one resigns or dies. In many cases, though, a representative will serve for a certain limited period such as five years, but it is not usual that all places should be elected at once. The limitation is more because the duty of service is seen as one that should have some term than to limit the power of a member or faction. Though some keen parliamentarians stand for re-election again and again. The job is not too arduous as most parliaments convene only a few times a year.

See Also: "Politics in Aristasia" at the *Encyclopaedia Aristasiana*

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Blonde and Brunette Names Wednesday, May 7 2008

Aristasian Customsaristasia9:03 pm

Miss Amalya Corinthian wondered:

In Telluria, some names are considered mascul, and others femin. Is this a schizomorphic practice, or do Aristasians consider some names more blonde/brunette than others? I was thinking about it, and it seems that way, at least to me, but only with certain names, so this is likely a lot more fluid than its Tellurian counterpart.

Raya Chancandre Aquitaine answered:

You are exactly right. In the matter of names, Aristasia is more fluid. In Telluria nearly all names are definitely mascul or femin, just as nearly all clothes (at least traditionally) are so. In Aristasia there are some names that would normally be for blondes and others for brunettes, but the majority are usable for either sex. In *The Princess and the Captain*, *Antala* is definitely a brunette name, as is *Claralin*. *Clarala* is a more likely blonde form. *Sushuri* is almost always a blonde name. *Thamë/Thamlä* is usually brunette.

Sometimes this may be a local or temporary phenomenon – for example if a famous person has held a particular name, children named after her will tend to be of the same sex that she is.

Aristasia is also more fluid in the matter of clothes, although many brunettes will shy off “very blonde” clothes. Some blondes, however, consider it cute to dress in styles that seem quite brunette.

In some parts of the East there are clothes that may only be worn by a particular sex, but such places will also tend to have rules (or at least strong customs) as to which clothes may be worn by particular ages and Estates too.

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The Salute Wednesday, Apr 16 2008

[Aristasian Customs](#)aristasia7:18 pm

Lady Aquila wrote:

The Aristasian salute touches either the left shoulder or the left side of the chest (there are many variants on the salute – not random – each military or other group using it will have its own strictly-observed form). Nonetheless the reference is to the heart (which is on the left side) and to the shoulder or arm (which is the instrument of action).

That the (relatively late) Tellurian salute should touch the head, which is the centre of lunar reason, which in turn is the focus of the rationalist revolution which ushered in the rajasic age in West Telluria, does not seem insignificant.



The salute to the head is known in Aristasia as are some other salutes used in different places and circumstances. The salute to the head generally has the effect of being jauntier and less formal than the standard salute, though there are a few contexts in which it is officially used. It has been used in pictures on the Aristasia Friends site largely because it is more readily recognised by newcomers than the standard Aristasian salute.

[3 Responses »](#)

Aristasian Gestures Tuesday, Apr 1 2008

[Aristasian Customs](#) and [Symbolism for Aristasians](#)aristasia11:30 pm

Lady Aquila wrote:

In Aristasia, as in all traditional cultures, the body is seen as *microcosmos* – the cosmos in miniature, with the interconnexions between the Great Body of the world, the small body of an individual maid and the body as a general, as opposed to an individual, phenomenon being a fundamental element in our understanding of each.

The heart is the Solar centre in maid, as the Sun is in the cosmos (the chest, by extension, refers to the heart, and also to the lungs, which are the source of *breath* - another aspect of the spirit – re-*spir*-ation is from the same word as *spiritus*).

The head is the lunar centre – so the light of reason is the reflected light of the solar Intellect, whose home in maid is the heart.

To touch first the forehead and then the chest is an in-gathering gesture, bringing exterior things (represented by the head) back to their true centre in the heart. It can be made in significance of receiving a teaching or a reprimand, thus it can also be a sign of humility. It can be made to acknowledge and centre ourselves in the Higher reality, or to show respect – gathering oneself in from the fragmented and peripheral world of the head to the still and Essential world of the heart.

Although in late western Telluria the heart has been taken as a (very loose) symbol for the emotions (so “heart vs head” means “reason vs emotion”), in Aristasia this is not the case. The heart is the centre of the Spirit, and thus of Pure Intellect. It is also the centre of Pure Love – first Divine Love and then its true reflection in human love. But it is not the centre of emotional impulses and passions. That is the stomach.

There is also an inverse form of this gesture, touching first the chest and then the forehead, and then opening the hand in a “giving” or “indicating” gesture. This is the “outward” gesture and is one of generosity. It might, for example, be used when inviting someone into one’s house. Its implication is “from my innermost being, through my exterior faculties, to you”.

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Maids and the Law Thursday, Feb 28 2008

Aristasian Customs and Aristasiansaristasia2:25 pm

A conversation from the Aristasian story *The Princess and the Captain*:

"D'you think we'll get into awful trouble?" asked 'Lannie. "When they catch us, I mean."

"No, love," replied Sharrie. "In Novaria a maid's duty is to do whatever her mistress tells her. If she don't do that she's breaking the law. But if she does, she's in the clear. Any misdemeanour is the responsibility of the mistress."

The two girls stood facing each other in the ship's galley in their short black dresses and starched white aprons. Sharrie had been the best cocktail waitress in Chelverton when Princess Melenhe had offered her more money and a life of adventure. After all, one could hardly take to the Aethyr without decent cocktails.

"It's not like that back home in Quirinelle is it, Sharrie?"

"No, love. In Quirinelle individuals are equal in the eyes of the law, but in Novaria bonded maids are regarded in the light of their bond."

"But we did volunteer to come up 'ere with 'Er 'Ighness, didn't we?"

"That don't make no difference. A maid is supposed to serve her mistress at all times, and whether the mistress is doing wrong is entirely her responsibility – unless she's under age. Now 'Er 'Ighness is under age — but so are we. So if anyone is punished it will still be 'er, so long as we're in Novaria, and since it's a Novarian ship, any proceedings will be Novarian, won't they?"

"Greenies! You ain't half well up in the law, Sharrie."

"You want to be when you get involved in this sort o' business."

"But what about 'Er 'Ighness? Won't she get in trouble?"

"She thinks the old Vikhar will get 'er orf any bother. I don't know. But she says: 'Sharrie, are you game for the biggest joy-ride in history? I promise you won't get into any trouble, but we might all get killed'. So I says: 'All right'. Then I says that to you, and you says 'all right' too. Well, you're only young once, ain't you? And if the mistresses ain't chicken I don't see why we should be."

"That's 'ow I see it too. Anyway, they'll look after their own skins, I reckon."

"I wouldn't reckon too much on that, love. That Miss Antala don't care about nothin'."

"It's Captain Antala now, Sharrie."

"Maybe it is; but she still don't care about nothin'. Come on, hurry up with them cocktails or we won't even be obeying our mistress. Then we'll be offenders in Novaria too!"

You can start reading *The Princess and the Captain* [here](#).

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Tea Tea Tea Friday, Feb 15 2008

Aristasian Customs and Aristasiansaristasia4:39 pm

Miss Adele Poppy wrote: As some of you know, I am relatively new to tea-drinking and have been experimenting with different teas to find the ones I like best. We also took little side excursions into the the question of loose tea vs. tea sachets (vulgarly called “tea bags”). Not surprisingly, loose tea won that contest. But on to the varieties of teas that we drank.

“We”, of course, are my excellent brunette and I. We have been together for many years (eleven, actually. Is that many? I suspect it may seem so to my poor, beset brunette), and we both have found ways of compromise so that we may live together in loving accord.

Bear with me. This is pertinent. You’ll see.

Brunette Wife’s Philosophy: The most important phrase in the English language with respect to marriage is: “Yes, Dear”.

Blonde Wife’s Prime Rule of Engagement: If you are in an argument, and you are right and your wife is wrong, you must apologize to her immediately, humbly and, above all, sincerely.

And then pour her some very good tea! Which brings us (finally) back to the subject of tea.

After much experimentation...oh, not really much, as these things go. After drinking some very lovely tea over the last year I have found two that I like particularly well: lapsang souchong (which is both capitalized and lower case, depending on the source) and Ti Kwan Yin.

Lapsang Souchong, also called Zengshan Xiaozhong, is a scented black tea with a pronounced woodsmoke flavor, which I like in the morning due to its bright, strong taste. Lapsang Souchong is perfectly wakey-uppy, but not at all subtle. I think it is delicious.

Ti Kwan Yin Oolong, also known as Tiguanyn and “Iron Goddess” (and lots of other names, actually, according to Wikipedia), has a quiet, rather sweet flavor with a complex and very pleasant aftertaste. It is called a “poet’s tea”, and I am hoping that it will cause me to become poetical, though that is probably beyond the capability of the best of teas. Ti Kwan Yin is a delicious tea that deserves appreciation. The flavor is flowery, and in fact seems to bloom in the mouth like a flower. It is my favorite of the two.

Have any of you pettes a favorite tea? Please tell me about it. I would be thrilled to try more varieties.

Miss Sushuri Madonna replied: I have never had Kuan Yin tea. It sounds most exciting!

My very favouritest tea is Gyokuro, which is a fine Japanese tea, probably too expensive for me to buy, but my dear cousin sent some (actually for an elder of my household, but one partakes!

Gunpowder Green is a very nice tea which comes in affordable little boxes from our (relatively) local Filipino supermarket (though the tea is in fact Chinese).

I think having the right teacups is very important. We have some gorgeous Japanese ones which we were fortunate enough to acquire for 5/- (about (\$10)).



Well if one is not that lucky, some dear little Chinese teacups are readily available at reasonable prices from any Chinese supermarket.

Happy drinking!

When you have found your perfect tea to drink, serve it in the perfect setting, whether it be a Japanese tea-house, or a summer garden:

Miss Melinda May added: I found this receipt for the perfect afternoon tea:

Use the prettiest, most delicate, china tea service you can.

Make sure your cutlery is gleaming bright.

Set the table with a snowy white lacy or linen table cloth and matching napkins.

Use tealeaves rather than teabags and provide a tea strainer.

As well as milk and sugar (lumps for preference, with silver tongs) have a small dish of sliced lemons.

Provide two teapots – one containing the actual tea and one with hot water.

Have a three-tiered cake stand with sandwiches on the bottom tier, freshly baked scones on the middle tier and a selection of fruitcake and fairy/cream cakes on the top tier. Place paper doilies on each tier before placing the food on it.

Suggested sandwich filling are: thinly sliced cucumber, salmon, and cream cheese. Use a mixture of white and brown/granary bread. Sandwiches should have the crusts removed and be cut into small triangles.

Garnish your sandwiches with a little mustard and cress or watercress and pretty up the scone and cake tiers by adding a few strawberries or other soft fruit.

Put jam, honey, clotted cream and butter into small individual pots or dishes.

Ideally, and weather permitting, serve your afternoon tea out of doors.

Although, I would suggest, not so far from the house that you would get soaked if it did start to rain!

[2 Responses »](#)

[Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush](#) Monday, Jun 11

2007

Aristasian Customs and Symbolism for Aristasiansaristasia4:35 pm

Many of the traditional rhymes and games of childhood have a deep inner spiritual meaning. The acting game "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" is an example. Here one player stands in the centre while the others form a ring around her. During the choruses they dance round her like the planets about the sun, while in each verse she chooses and leads the action (*this is the way we clap our hands, sow the corn etc.*). In some versions she is a bramble-bush, but both the bramble and the mulberry are associated with forms of Dea*, and is a minor representative of the World Tree. In each case she represents the still Point at the centre of manifestation, the solar Spirit Herself, by Whom all the forms of manifestation are expressed in their perfect Essence and are reflected upon the rim of the wheel of being, (in the realm of movement and multiplicity).



There are many rhyme-games of this sort. Strictly (because of the perfect "obedience" of the ring) this one represents not the relation of hub to the rim of the wheel, but of the axle-point to the hub that is to say, of God Herself to the Angelic or Archetypal realm of unfallen creation. Competitive versions which turn upon the mistakes made by the players represent the relation of the hub to the rim the fallen world of matter, which mirrors the Spirit, yet is 'a broken and imperfect reflection' of Her.

* Note: There are Tellurian parallels – for example, in the Iliad the goddess Hera decorates her pierced ears with mulberry clusters and the mulberry is also sacred to Minerva; the bramble was sacred to St Bridget of Ireland (originally the goddess Brighde); the Chinese goddess Ma-Ku took land from the sea and planted it with mulberry trees. Many more examples can be found.

From Nursery Rhymes: the Inner Meaning

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The Curtsey Friday, May 25 2007

Aristasian Customs and Symbolism for Aristasiansaristasia4:44 pm

It is believed the curtsey originated in certain parts of the further East and that the rationale behind it was as follows:

Human beings are the only creatures with an upright posture, and this is because they are the Axial being. When we bow we defer our axially bringing the upper body nearer to the horizontal in homage to the verticality of another.

It is said that certain ancient Estrenne cultures held that blondes – being sacred – could never lose their axially even relatively, thus they made reverence without inclining themselves toward the horizontal. In later times, of course, most curtsies came to incorporate some degree of inclination, but this is held – by some at least – to be their origin.

Incidentally, it is also said that the quasi-upright posture of birds when not in flight betokens their position as winged symbols of angelic powers.

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Queen of the May Tuesday, May 1 2007

[Aristasian Customs](#) and [Devotion and Religion in Aristasia](#) and [The Aristasian Calendar](#)aristasia3:03 pm



May Day is a traditional term for the feast of the Exaltation of the Queen of Heaven, and the crowning of the Queen of the May is a custom of the day, as is the raising and decorating of the maypole, which represents the Sacred Tree connecting Heaven with the lower world.

The Exaltation of the Queen of Heaven is the most glorious of the Daughter-Festivals: the culmination of the Daughter-half of the year that begins at Nativity. As Princess of the World, the Daughter governs all the cycles of life and nature; as Priestess of the World, She gives us Communion with Her Mother; as Queen of Heaven, She rules all the higher worlds and brings us to the Celestial Throne. The Paradise of the Daughter, or Jewelled Island, is the Heaven-World for those who, without attaining final liberation and still in the “individual” state, are taken into the pure and blessed haven of the Daughter’s love.

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How Many Miles to Abolan? Wednesday, Apr 18 2007

Aristasian Customs and Symbolism for Aristasiansaristasia12:12 am

*How many miles to Abolan?
 Three score and ten.
 Can I get there by candle-light?
 Yes, and back again.
 If thy heels be fleet and light
 You'll be there by candle-light.
 (Open the gates as wide as you may
 And let the Rayin's horses pass through on their way.)*

In many Tellurian versions, the Holy City of Abolan appears as the somewhat-assonant Babylon (though in other versions it is Edinburgh or some other city). This use of the Wicked City is a rather ironic, since it obscures the whole point of the rhyme. In Aristasia Abolan was the capital of the old Western Empire (Abolrai), and the name is related to Avala, the Western paradise or Isles of the Blest. Abolan is a type of the Holy City, and as such, the Heart, Centre and Temple of the surrounding land. The Journey to Abolan is, therefore, maid's spiritual pilgrimage to the true Centre. Three score and ten, of course, is not a number picked at random, but is a symbolic length in folk-tradition for a human life.

Many of the critical junctures of life occur at the multiples of seven years: the attainment of reason at seven, temple-entry in the East at fourteen, adulthood at twenty-one, the Grand Climacteric at 49 etc. 7×10 links human life to the historical cycle (symbolised by 10). The light of a candle is a traditional image of a single human life. Thus the road to Abolan is the spiritual journey of a maid's earthly life; a life lived in thamë, whose every activity, however apparently 'worldly', is related to the Centre, and whose reward is a coming-to-the-Centre. It is not, however, a reward won lightly, for she must exercise skill and speed in order to attain the Goal.

This idea brings us to the final two lines. They are placed in brackets because they are used only when 'Abolan' is played as a game. The Rayin (queen) represents the human soul, and her horses are the various powers and tendencies of the soul which must be disciplined and harnessed in order to attain the Goal. Two players (they may or may not be children) choose the names of 'opposites' such as gold and silver, day and night, and then hold up their hands to form a gate. The other players form a 'crocodile' (the Rayin's entourage) in front of the gate, and the rhyme is recited as an exchange between them and the gates. At the end the gates open and they pass through, but the gates come down in an attempt to trap the last player. This is the "perilous passage" motif so common in the fairy tales: the need to pass through all the dualities and oppositions of the world in order to attain the Absolute, the Oneness, which lies beyond them.



The necessity of swiftness represents spiritual skill; if the player is too slow, she will be caught, and even if she succeeds her tail may be docked by the gates (often the soul is represented by a hare or a bird). The rest of the game reinforces the concept of the conflict of opposites which creates the flux of the material world and of the perilous passage: each child, as she is caught, must choose in whispers one of the two secret names, and, having chosen, lines up behind the gate to which it belongs. When all the players have been caught there is a tug-of-war between the two sides, and sometimes the losers must run the gauntlet between the winners, who attempt to whip their legs with long grasses or thin sally (willow) switches as they pass through.

See also

[Nursery Rhymes: *The inner meaning*](#)

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